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ELECT PRESIDiums OF PEOPLE'S COUNCILS;
SET UP OFFICE OF RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS

BEIRUT STRESSES IMPORTANCE OF ELECTION -- Warsaw Express Wieczorny, 23 May 50

The election of people's council presidiums starting today is an unusually important event in the history of Poland. It opens a new era of democratic life based on the statute which provides for the creation of local bodies by the unified state authority which was approved by the Sejm on 20 March 1950.

The essential meaning of the statute has been brought out in President Bierut's speech. He stated that the statute will (1) create a closer union between state authorities and the needs, interests, and wishes of the working masses, (2) strengthen the state authority through the unification and closer participation of the working masses in the government, (3) increase the efficiency of the state government, and replace the old legislative and administrative divisions with central and local authorities, (4) facilitate the fight against bureaucracy by extending the control of the people, and (5) increase the creative initiative and activity of the masses in building the new social order and achieving strength, welfare, and national culture.

The powers of the peoples' councils will be greatly increased. They will govern through the medium of the presidiums.

The presidium of a people's council is composed of the chairman, the alternate or alternates, the secretary, and the members of the presidium. It is the executive body of the council, directs the economic, sociological, and cultural activities, directs the operations of the enterprises, factories, and institutes subject to the council, prepares the local budget and economic plan, and sets up the guiding principles of the departments.

The presidium is directly responsible to the council and to the presidium of the council on the level above it in carrying out the guiding principles established by that presidium.

Commissions established to secure the cooperation of social organizations outside the council are of special importance. They will supervise the activities of individual departments and will be partly responsible for combating bureaucracy.

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The presidium members will be chosen from among individuals closely associated with the working masses who understand their needs, are capable organizers, and are also capable of completing the tasks assigned to them.

SEJM PROCEEDING REPORTED -- Mannheim Ostatnie Wiadomosci, 19 Apr 50

Premier Cyrankiewicz introduced a bill to the Sejm providing for the formation of a special Office of Religious Affairs, also to deal with state-church relations.

Following the adoption of the law on national councils, which means, in effect, the merger of local legislative and administrative jurisdiction; the government liquidated the superfluous Ministry of Public Administration, and established in its place the Ministry of Communal Economy. The new ministry will have exclusive control over the economic affairs of towns and rural areas.

All religious denominational matters which were under the jurisdiction of Ministry of Public Administration will be dealt with by the newly created Office of Religious Affairs.

The Sejm approved court proceedings against Stanislaw Wrony Merski, of the pro-government Peasants' Party, charged with persecution of his fellow prisoners while performing his duties as a concentration camp physician.

The Sejm agreed to subject Bronislaw Kloc, a non-Party deputy, to disciplinary action by the Lawyers' Council. Deputy Jan Burdzy, member of the Communist Party, renounced his appointment to the Sejm.

TO ESTABLISH OFFICE OF CHIEF PROSECUTOR -- Mannheim Ostatnie Wiadomosci, 28 Jul 50

The Sejm has passed a law establishing the office of Chief Prosecutor, similar to the office of the Soviet prosecutor. The Chief Prosecutor will be appointed by the Council of State and not by the president of the republic. The new office will be an autonomous unit outside the jurisdiction of the normal court organization. This gives the Chief Prosecutor in Poland as great authority as Prosecutor Vishinskiy had at the time of the Soviet purges.

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